



Jenny and Harry are pure gold!

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Jenny Turner and Harry Fairchild won gold for Great Britain at the T21 European Championship for athletes with Down Syndrome, held in Tampere, Finland.

Turner's gold came in the women's singles as she defeated Russia's Leisan Zaripova in a tight final by a margin of 3-2 (10-12, 11-7, 11-6, 7-11, 11-9).

It was a reversal of the result in the group stage, when the Russian won 3-0 (11-8, 12-10, 11-7), although Cheshire athlete Turner went through in second place thanks to a 3-0 (11-2, 11-4, 11-5) victory over Merve Peker of Turkey. She then defeated Czech athlete Dita Anderova 3-0 (11-2, 11-4, 11-5) in the semi-finals.

Fairchild's gold came in the men's doubles, the Brighton TTC player partnering Joao Goncalves from Portugal. The pair won all four matches in the round-robin competition, for the loss of only one set, to top the standings. Brighton duo Andrew Tonkin & Chris O'Flinn just missed out on the medals, finishing in fourth place.

Fairchild also took silver in the men's singles. He won his group with three victories out of three, although it was 12-10 in the deciding fifth against Salihcan Oztankal of Turkey. In the quarter-finals, he defeated Enes Yilmaz, also of Turkey, in three straight and then overcame Italy's Matteo Giomo in a tight semi-final by a score of 3-0 (15-13, 13-11, 14-12).

In the final, he was up against his doubles partner Goncalves, and it was the Portuguese who prevailed 3-0 (14-12, 12-10, 11-8) in another close contest.

Tonkin added a bronze for Great Britain in the singles, reaching the semi-finals where he was defeated 3-0 (11-5, 11-3, 11-4) by Goncalves.



Andrew Tonkin and Harry Fairchild in action in the team event (picture by Alexis Maryon)

Fairchild and Turner also won bronze, in the mixed doubles, as they overcame Oztankal & Peker of Turkey in the quarter-finals but then missed out to the Italian-Russian combination of Giomo & Zaripova in the semi-finals, being edged out 3-2 (11-6, 7-11, 12-10, 6-11, 11-9).

In the team event, the three Brighton players represented Great Britain but just missed out on the medals with a fourth-place finish.

Brighton TTC's Pedro Santos and Wen Wei Xu coached the GB squad. Santos said: "A lot of hard work by Harry, Andrew and Chris has seen a great improvement in their play. The medals were thoroughly deserved and are a great encouragement to the many players with Down Syndrome who play regularly at the club, and all our other players."

68 athletes from 11 countries took part in the table tennis tournament and track and field events. The championship was organised by the Sports Union for Athletes with Down Syndrome (SU-DS). GB finished second in the overall medals table.

Click below to watch videos from the competition, courtesy of Caleb Yule.

[Chris O'Flinn and Andrew Tonkin in the singles](#)

[Men's Doubles final, featuring Harry Fairchild](#)

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